

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AF-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	INL-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DS-00	EUR-00	VCI-00	H-00	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	MOFM-00	MOF-00	M-00
	VCIE-00	NEA-00	NSAE-00	ISN-00	NSCE-00	OIC-00	NIMA-00
	PA-00	GIWI-00	PRS-00	P-00	ISNE-00	FMPC-00	SP-00
	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	SCRS-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 000399

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/17/2019  
 TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#)  
 SUBJECT: LAOS REACTION TO ASSK VERDICT

REF: STATE 83598

Classified By: Classified by Charge d'Affairs a.i. Peter M.  
 Haymond for Reasons 1.5(b) and (d)

Summary  
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11. (C) Ministry of Foreign Affairs ASEAN Department's Deputy Director General Kham-Inh Khitchadeth told Poloff that the ASEAN Charter's principle of non-interference in internal affairs of member countries precluded ASEAN from engaging Burma on the outcome of the trial of Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK).

He expected the upcoming ASEAN SOM would discuss the situation in Burma, but the GOL would not support a special meeting of ASEAN. Kham-Inh acknowledged Poloff's point that international reaction to Burma's action has negative effects for ASEAN and Burma and undertook to pass the message to his superiors. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) Poloff met August 17 with Kham-Inh Khitchadeth, Deputy Director General, ASEAN Department, MFA, to discuss points in reftel and to follow-up on discussions between Senator Jim Webb and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Thongloun Sisoulit (reported septel).

13. (C) In response to Poloff's request for support of Malaysia's call for an urgent meeting of ASEAN on the ASSK conviction, Kham-Inh said he personally understood the international reaction to the conviction of ASSK, but the ASEAN Charter's principle of non-interference in internal affairs of member countries precluded ASEAN from engaging Burma on the trial's outcome. Although not supportive of a special meeting on Burma, Kham-Inh presumed the previously scheduled ASEAN SOM in Jakarta this weekend would discuss the situation in Burma. He lamented that seemingly every meeting of ASEAN now dealt with Burma and North Korea.

14. (C) Poloff explained that ASEAN could play a productive role by helping Burma understand the negative effects of its actions on ASEAN and Burma, and stressed the importance of a united ASEAN voice in this regard. Kham-Inh accepted this point and undertook to report it up the chain of command,

though he gave no indication any future public statements would on this issue would be forthcoming.

15. (SBU) On ASSK's role in upcoming elections and the need to free all political detainees, Kham-Inh noted the complexity of the situation in Burma and the problems associated with governing the multiple ethnic groups that make up Burmese society.

Comment

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16. (C) Kham-Inh's response that ASEAN does not interfere in internal affairs closely tracked the August 14 press statement issued by the MFA spokesperson in reaction to ASSK's conviction. The GOL clearly worries about instability in Burma, and Kham-Inh echoed the statements made by Deputy Prime Minister Thongloun to Senator Webb about the complexity of the multi-ethnic make-up of Burmese society. The press release underscored ASEAN's principle of non-interference, claimed the trial of ASSK followed Burmese judicial procedure, and expressed confidence in Burma's implementation of its roadmap to democracy. It was very brief and contained none of the nuance of DPM Thongloun's discussion with Senator Webb.

HAYMOND